

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT, US, OVIP
SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT OF LARGE GROUP OF PARLIAMENTARIANS
FROM "FRIENDS OF AMERICA CLUB"

1. THE "FRIENDS OF AMERICA CLUB," AN ASSOCIATION WHICH NUMBERS AMONG ITS MEMBERS SOME 140 SENATORS AND DEPUTIES UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF A DC DEPUTY MARIO GARGANO, HAS APPROACHED THE EMBASSY FOR ASSISTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH A CLUB-SPONSORED VISIT TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, JUNE 2-11. ALTHOUGH MOSTLY CHRISTIAN DEMOCARTS, THE CLUB ALSO INCLUDES MEMBERS FROM THE OTHER DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. THE CLUB EXPECTS THAT SOME 50 MEMBERS INCLUDING WIVES WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE US TRIP, TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FOR WHICH ARE BEING MADE BY PAN AMERICAN.

2. THE CLUB UNDERSTANDS THAT THERE ARE LIMITATIONS ON THE TYPES OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES THAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR A GROUP OF THIS SIZE. IT NONETHELESS HOPES THAT THE VISITING ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS IN THE CONGRESS AS WELL AS APPROPRIATE MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION. THEY WOULD BE AMENABLE TO HOSTING A DINNER AT A HOTEL OR OTHER SUITABLE LOCATION (IN WASHINGTON THEY WILL BE AT THE SHOREHAM AMERICANA) TO WHICH US OFFICIALS INTERESTED IN ITALY MIGHT BE INVITED. IF INTERPRETING ASSISTANCE COULB BE PROVIDED, IT MIGHT ALSO BE POSSIBLE TO DIVIDE THE
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GROUP IN NUMBERS SUITABLE FOR CALLS ON INDIVIDUAL CONGRESSMAN, DEPARTMENT AND NSC OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH ITALY, AND APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC SPECIALISTS.

3. THE GROUP HAS ASKED WHETHER IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. THEY WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT THE PRESIDENT WITH AN AWARD OF THE "FREE NATIONAL CONFEDERA-

TION OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM" HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLES. WE HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE DEMANDS ON THE PRESIDENT'S TIME ARE HEAVY. SHOULD A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS PARTICIPATE IN THE VISIT, HOWEVER, A BRIEF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD HAVE A HIGHLY FAVORABLE IMPACT IN DEMONSTRATING HIGH"LEVEL CONSIDERATION AND INTEREST IN ITALY'S FUTURE. SUCH AN EVENT (EVEN FOR A FEW MINUTES) MIGHT BE ARRANGED IN CONNECTION WITH A WHITE HOUSE TOUR FOR THE GROUP. ALTERNATIVELY, THE VICE PRESIDENT MIGHT MEET WITH THE GROUP BEIEFLY AND ACCEPT THE "GOLDEN GRIFFIN" AWARD ON THE PRESIDENT'S BEHALF.

4. THE CLUB HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SENATORS RANDOLPH AND BYRD (W. VA) AND IN AN EXPLORATORY VISIT LAST JUNE (ROME 10067 6-17-77) ALSO PAID CALLS ON SENATORS KENNEDY AND DOMENICI AS WELL AS CONGRESSMAN DODINO. DEPARTMENT MIGHT USEFULLY CONTACT THESE SENATORS, ADVISING THEM OF CLUB'S PLANS AND DETERMINING WHETHER THEY MIGHT MEET WITH GROUP. ADDITIONALLY, OTHER MEMBERS OF ITALIAN-AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS AND CONGRESSMEN PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN ITALY SUCH AS BIDEN AND BROOKE MIGHT BE CONTACTED.

5. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS DEPARTMENT MIGHT HAVE TO MAKE THIS A SUCCESSFUL VISIT. WHILE THE PURPOSES OF THE TRIP ARE LARGELY TOURISTIC TO SATISFY THE INTEREST OF MANY WELL-DISPOSED PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO HAVE NEVER VISITED THE US, THE CLUB HOPES THAT CONTACTS WITH CONGRESSMEN AND OTHER WILL UNCLASSIFIED

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ENABLE THEM TO INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTIPLICATION OF US-ITALIAN RELATIONSHIPS. GROUP IS NOW SCHEDULED TO VISIT NEW YORK, JUNE 3-7 AND WASHINGTON, JUNE 9-11 (NOTE, PARTIALLY A WEEKEND). HOWEVER, ITINERARY COULD BE REVERSED SHOULD THIS FACILITATE WASHINGTON PROGRAMMING. ADVISE.GARDNER

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